**American Public Power Association**

The American Public Power Association (APPA) is the service organization for more than 2,000 U.S. community-owned electric utilities that serve more than 46 million Americans (Unkown, 2012). APPA was created in September 1940 to represent the common interest of these utilities today. Today APPA’s purpose is to advanced the public policy interest of its members, and consumers but is to provide member services to ensure adequate, reliable electricity at a reasonable price with the proper protection of the environment (Unkown, 2012). Membership is open to U.S. public powers utilities, joint action agencies, rural electric cooperatives, Canadian municipal/provincial utilities, public power systems within the U.S. territories and possessions, and state, regional, and local associations in the United States and Canada that serve a purpose similar to the APPA. Some memberships include: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Long Island Power Authority, Salt River Project in Arizona, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, JEA in Florida and Seattle City Light (Unkown, 2012).

APPA is the national advocate for public power in Washington D.C., on Legislative and Regulatory issues, and legal proceedings. APPA lobbies public power positions, and monitors and reports on federal events and activities. APPA’s legislative and resolution committee gives all utility members an opportunity to develop consensus on issues, as do task force, committees, and workgroups. The annual Legislative Rally brings managers and policy makers together in Washington D.C. to tell the story of public power. APPA offers many opportunities to learn from and network colleagues, utility experts, and local and national policymakers (Unkown, 2012). The annual National Conference is the largest public power meeting. Other annual meetings cover business and financial, engineering, and operations, legal, community broadband, and customer and community services topics. APPA also conducts smaller professional-developmental courses and provides a variety of continuing education and consumer-oriented materials (Unkown, 2012).

Politics is all about deciding who gets what, when and how. Organization provides a means to greater power in deciding these questions. Social interest groups, who include civil rights organizations, labor movements, religious organizations, environmental groups, and others, serve important roles in the political process. By organizing the interests of people they represent, interest groups provide a voice for underrepresented segments of society and provide a check on majority rule (Hall, 1999-2012). The American political system includes principles of democracy, including majority rule, but also includes protection of the rights of those who are not in the majority. Social interest groups, such as those based on ethnic, gender or religious identities, provide an important check on the powers of majorities by giving voice to these and other interests, who may be historically underrepresented or disenfranchised (Hall, 1999-2012). Social interest groups, including civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and women's rights groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), provide an avenue for political action and involvement for many people (Hall, 1999-2012). These groups provide information to their members, keeping them up-to-date on political issues that affect them. Involvement in a social interest group often sparks greater political involvement, resulting in a more informed and active citizenry (Hall, 1999-2012).

# Works Cited

Hall, S. (1999-2012). *What are the benefits of Social Interest Groups*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from ehow: www.ehow.com/whatarethebenefitsofsocialinterestgroups

Unkown. (2012, January 19). *Public Power Association*. Retrieved April 23, 2012, from Wikipedia: www.wikipedia.org/American Pubic Power Association